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## Today is National Maritime Day

Across the country today National Maritime Day celebrations are taking place in honor of our country's mariners and maritime history.

In 1933, Congress declared May 22 to be National Maritime Day, selecting the day in honor of the *Savannah*, which made the first transoceanic passage under steam propulsion.

Do an online search to figure out if there are any National Maritime Day celebrations taking place near you.

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## ShiPosium III *What a Spectacular Conference*

From May 15th to May 18th we hosted our third ShiPosium and the 2014 Annual Conference in Newport, Rhode Island. Members from around the country joined SSHSA staff and the Board of Directors for presentations, special receptions, fantastic tours, and our 2014 Awards Gala. [Click here to visit our Flickr page for photos from the conference!](#)

**President's Reception:** On the first evening of the conference, members gathered for the President's Reception at the Sanford-Covell Villa Marina, situated right along Newport Harbor. This bed and breakfast was the former home of William King Covell III, one of SSHSA's founders. Mr. Covell's granddaughter, Anne, filled tables with historic memorabilia related to both her grandfather and steamships for members to peruse. SSHSA member Andy Lizak also arranged for six paintings and artifacts from the Fall River Museum to be brought to the house just for the reception - paintings that once hung on the walls of the home itself.

With great food, drink, and company, we gathered at the home which included a wrap-around piazza where guests mingled and enjoyed the harbor view.

As a unique bonus to the evening, SSHSA members Bill Doyle and Jed Pearsall treated President's Reception guests to a special tour of their own home, located right next door to the Sanford-Covell Villa Marina. They have

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kept their 18th century home remarkably authentic to the original home, including furniture - which still remains in much the same position it was during the home's early days. One unique tidbit Mr. Doyle shared with us was that when the Covell house was being constructed next door circa 1860, his home was actually in the process of receiving its first building addition to the rear of the home! This addition was one of the earliest identified works by Charles McKim, who later formed the renowned architectural firm McKim, Meade and White.

The reception was quite a treat, and we could not have asked for a better venue than the Covell House or a more hospitable host than Anne. What a great start to the conference!

***ShiPosium III:*** The third ShiPosium conference began on Friday morning at the Newport Harbor Hotel and Marina. Throughout the day we heard from experts on topics related to this year's theme "Above and Below the Waterline."

The morning portion of the conference featured presentations by:

- John Palmieri of the Herreshoff Marine Museum, who spoke about the early Herreshoff torpedo boats.
- Representatives of the SS Columbia Project, who gave a detailed account of the SS *Columbia*, and the "Bob-Lo" boat's current status and plans for its future.
- Restorers of the commuter yacht *Aphrodite*, where guests had the opportunity to view images of her spectacular restoration.
- John Henry, author of *The Great White Fleet*, and winner of the 2014 C. Bradford Mitchell Award, who spoke about Canada Steamship Lines passenger ships.

After lunch, we gathered again for the "Below the Waterline" portion of our conference for tales of ships that fared not so well:

- Heather Knowles and David Caldwell of Northern Atlantic Dive Expeditions who gave an account of the tug USS *Nezinscot* and the aftermath of the sinking.
- Matthew Lawrence of the Stellwagen Bank National Sanctuary who gave us an overview of NOAA's work to preserve the SS *Portland*.
- Don Leavitt, author of *PowerShips*' "From the Collection" column shared his "Disaster Ships" finds from the SSHSA collections.
- Finally, SSHSA's own Astrid Drew unveiled "From Sail to Steam," SSHSA's Educational Outreach Program.

At the end of the day we met up once more for a special reception at the hotel to wind down. Day 1 of ShiPosium was a great success, and we were very much looking forward to Day 2 at the International Yacht Restoration School.

***ShiPosium (Day 2) Tour of IYRS:*** The following morning, ShiPosium continued with a special tour of the International Yacht Restoration School, located just 1/2 mile from the Newport Harbor Hotel. SSHSA members were met by Loriana DeCrescenzo, Director of Philanthropy at IYRS, and were given a brief history of the school and examples of what students were working on. During the tour, guests were able to speak with IYRS students about their projects, and viewed other students' works-in-progress.

Guests were then directed to IYRS' library, located on the 4th floor of a restored 1831 Aquidneck Mill. The library contains more than 4,000 nautical titles, rare books, and source materials that give students a look into the maritime past—including logbooks, yacht registers, and yacht club directories. Additionally, the library houses several ship models, including one of the schooner, *Coronet*. Built in 1885, the *Coronet* is currently being restored at IYRS through the generosity of Dr. Robert McNeil of Coronet Restoration Partners.

Following the guests' visit to the library, we were able to see the *Coronet* first-hand, and met with Dr. McNeil who spent time discussing restoration plans, the restoration work that has already been done, and answering questions about the *Coronet*. Guests took a closer look at the planking of the schooner, and Dr. McNeil showed them various artifacts that were removed from the vessel during the restoration process. SSHSA is grateful for the opportunity to visit IYRS and to speak with Dr. McNeil. We look forward to seeing the *Coronet* restored to her former glory!

***Rum Runner II:*** The cruise of Newport Harbor on board the classic motor yacht *Rum Runner II* was a weekend highlight. *Rum Runner II* was built in

1929 during the height of Prohibition. Originally built for two New Jersey mobsters to elude the Coast Guard, she now offers cruises past Newport mansions and former speakeasies that were fueled by seaborne smugglers back in the 1920s-1930s. Despite a little wind, the afternoon was bright and sunny and the perfect day for a boat ride. With complimentary drinks in hand, passengers relaxed onboard to enjoy the ride and tour of Newport Harbor.

Guests particularly enjoyed the stories of Newport history, such as the tale of Ida Lewis, a longtime keeper of the Lime Rock Lighthouse (now home to the Ida Lewis Yacht Club), and of Clingstone, a house built in 1905 that is perched on top of a small, rocky island in Newport Harbor. The Captain and crew of the *Rum Runner II* were friendly and knowledgeable of the Harbor's rich history. All aboard thoroughly enjoyed their time on this motor yacht!

**Awards Gala:** The 2014 Awards Gala was held at the Atlantic Beach Club overlooking the ocean. The evening was full of activity and camaraderie. During the cocktail hour people perused over the silent auction, which consisted of donations from members and friends including an original print from maritime artist William Muller and original photo print from Martin Cox; and items donated by the Newport Preservation Society and SSHSA member James Berwind.

After a delicious buffet dinner and while sipping coffee and munching on desserts, our 2014 Awards Ceremony began. Seven awards were announced during the evening:

- H. Graham Wood Award, presented in January 2014 to SSHSA Past President CDR John Hamma prior to his passing.
- Samuel Ward Stanton Award, presented to Mr. Dennis Hale, sole survivor of the *Daniel J. Morrell* sinking
- Jay Allen Award, recognizing Mr. Geoffrey Hamer for more than 35 years as the Overseas Editor in *Steamboat Bill* and *Powerships*.
- Mr. John Henry, author of *The Great White Fleet: Celebrating Canada Steamship Lines Passenger Ships*
- The Yacht *Aphrodite*
- The tugboat *William Foss*
- Ship of the Year *Edward M. Cotter*

The final portion of the evening began around 8:30 pm with our much anticipated Keynote speech by Mr. Dennis Hale, author of *Shipwrecked*. Mr. Hale began his presentation with a short video of dive footage of the wreck of the *Daniel J. Morrell*, which sank during a storm on Lake Huron in 1966. Dennis told his captivating story, about the tragic sinking of the ship and his subsequent struggle to survive while holding on aboard a life raft.

A great time was had by all at this year's gala. We thank Dennis Hale for Keynoting the event, and to all who attended and bid during the Silent Auction. Congratulations to the winners!

***Member Breakfast, Annual Meeting and Special***

***Presentation:*** On Sunday morning, we held our member breakfast before the Annual Meeting, where members could gather informally one last time before the end of the conference. Following breakfast, SSHSA President Erik Ryan initiated the Annual Meeting, where brief reports were heard on the status of the organization.

USCG Traveling Senior Marine Inspector, Marc Cruder, made a presentation after the Annual Meeting. In "The Regulator's Year in Review (...adding more STEAM to the fleet...)" Mr. Cruder gave an update on Historic Ship Projects involving Coast Guard Headquarters Traveling Inspection Staff since last ShiPosium, including an examination of issues and status of the steam tug *Hercules* and the SS *Red Oak Victory* as well as other Historic Ship Projects on the horizon.

***Herreshoff Marine Museum:*** On the final day of ShiPosium, guests were invited to visit the Herreshoff Marine Museum in Bristol, Rhode Island— about a half hour drive from Newport. The Museum has many significant boats on display, including the dinghy *Nathanael*;

the *Defiant*, built for the successful defense of the America's Cup; Harold Vanderbilt's *Trivia*; Rhode Island's oldest boat, *Sprite*, (which Herreshoff claims to be the oldest existing private yacht in the U.S.); and Captain Nat's personal yachts, the 1887 *Clara* and the 1925 *Pleasure*.

The Nathanael Greene Herreshoff Model Room holds Captain Nat's models used to create his designs, including his America's Cup defenders. This room was closed to the public, but SSHSA members were able to get a glimpse of the models through a glass window viewing area. Guests were also able to take a short walk to the building where the museum houses the Reliance Project, where a one-sixth scale museum-quality model of *Reliance* is being constructed. A special "thank you" to Harris Gruber, the museum's Volunteer Manager, and Sandy Lee, the Project Manager of the Reliance Project for their time showing our guests around and answering questions!

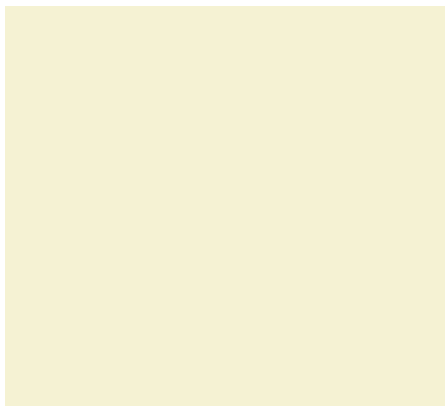
***Photos from top to bottom:***

- View of Newport from the port at the Sanford-Covell Villa Marina.
- SSHSA members Dale Flick, Jim Shuttleworth, and Larry and Carole Miller at the President's Reception.
- Executive Director Matt Schulte welcomes members to ShiPosium III.
- Dr. Bob McNeil speaks to SSHSA members about the International Yacht Restoration School.
- View of the *Coronet*, currently under restoration at IYRS.
- The *Rum Runner II* prepares to leave the dock for the harbor cruise.
- 2014 Awards Gala at the Atlantic Beach Club.
- Keynote Speaker Dennis Hale tells his harrowing tale.
- Members have breakfast before the Annual Meeting on Sunday.
- Nathanael Greene's *Clara*, at the Herreshoff Marine Museum.

## Upcoming Maritime Conferences

SSHSA is a Heritage Sponsor of the **Tenth Maritime Heritage Conference** coming up in Norfolk, Virginia, September 17-21, 2014. To learn more about this exciting event, [click here](#).

The **Council of American Maritime Museums** has announced it will hold the 2015 Conference at the Lost Angeles Maritime Museum from April 13-14, 2015.



*Ahoy!* is the quarterly electronic newsletter for those interested in maritime history. It is produced in February, May, August and November and distributed by Steamship Historical Society of America to friends, members and any other individuals interested in maritime heritage.  
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